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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 /071 W
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R 191711Z MAR 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3943
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 2251

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CI, PGOV
SUBJECT: PINOCHET'S MARCH 18 SPEECH

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S MARCH 18 SPEECH, HERALDED AS BEING OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE, TURNED OUT TO BE NEARLY A NONEVENT. HE SAID LITTLE NEW. THE SPEECH WAS ANTICLIMATIC AND DEFENSIVE IN TONE. WE SPECULATE THAT PINOCHET WAS TAKEN ABACK BY SPECIFIC CRITICISM OF THE DISSOLUTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND GENERAL CRITICISM OF THE REGIME. HE FELT OBLIGED TO COME TO HIS OWN DEFENSE. END SUMMARY.

2. PINOCHET OPENED BY REVIEWING THE ECONOMIC SCENE AND REPEATING THE USUAL LITANY OF GAINS: STRONG BALANCE OF PAYMENTS POSITION, ACCUMULATING INTERNATIONAL RESERVES, GROWTH OF NONTRADITIONAL EXPORTS, INCREASE IN FOREIGN INVESTMENTS, AND DIMINISHING INFLATION. WITH SOME EXAGGERATION HE ALSO FOUND INEMPLOYMENT GOING DONW AND INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RISING. THE PRESIDENT SHOWED SENSITIVITY REGARDING RECENT FINANCIAL SCANDALS AND CRITICEZED THOS WHO TRY TO EXPLOIT THTESE EVENTS OF LITTLE GLOBAL IMPORTANCE.
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3. TURNING TO POLITICAL THEMES, PINOCHET EMPHASIZED THE SOCIAL PEACE REIGNING IN CHILE, LAUDED HIS GOVERNMENT'S RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DREW ATTENTION TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL ACTS WHICH HAD BEEN PROMULGATED, AND PROMISED THAT ADDITIONAL PROGRESS WOULD COME ON CONSTITUTIONAL ACTS DEALING WITH ORGANS OF THE STATE (PRESUMABLY THIS MEANS AN ELABORATION OF EXECUTIVE AND

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LEGISLATIVE POWERS). HE AFFIRMED THE GOC'S UNLIMITED RESPECT OF JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE INVIOLABILITY OF THE JUDICIARY'S DECISIONS. THIS LAT POINT CLEARLY REFLECTS PINOCHET'S CONCERN WITH RECENT CRITICISM THAT THE EXECUTIVE MIGHT OVERRIDE THE JUDICIARY IN ANY CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO BRANCHES.

4. PINOCHET EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE TO INTENSIFY THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND STATED THAT "IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE PROJECTS" HAD BEEN SENT TO THE COUNCIL DURING THE WEEK. THIS SEEMS TO BE A CLEAR REACTION TO RECENT INDICATIONS THAT THE COUNCIL WAS VERY DISSATISFIED WITH THE TASKS GIVEN TO IT SO FAR AND BECAUSE ITS ADVICE HAD NOT BEEN SOUGHT BEFORE RECENT IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT DECISIONS. PINOCHET WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD SERVE AS THE NUCLEAUS OF A LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER WHICH WOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED WITH MEMERS OF POPULAR ORIGIN ("GENERACION POPULAR"), WHO WOULD BE PRODUCED BY MECHANISMS THAT WOULD INSURE THE "REAL CIVIC QUALITY OF THOSE CHOSEN." COMMENT: PINOCHET IN PRIVATE HAD SAID PREVIOUSLY THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD EVOLVE INTO A LEGISLATURE; BUT HOW THE PEOPLE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCESS IS VAGUE, TO PUT IT MILDLY. END COMMENT.

5. GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS, PINOCHET SAID IT WAS NECESSARY "TO CLEAR THE ROAD" OF THE OLD PARTIES, WHICH WERE DEMAGOGIC AND FAVORED MARXIST INFILTRATION, TO MAKE WAY FOR NEW PARTIES THAT WOULD BE "PURELY CURRENTS OF OPINION." THERE WOULD BE NO INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE AUTHORITIES. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS' SYSTEMTIC TRANGRESSION OF THE POLITICAL RECESS HAD ONLY FBRCED THE HASTENING OF THE DISSOLUTION MEASURE. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS THEMSELVES HAD LEARNED NOTHING FROM THE PAST AND WERE AMBIGUOUSD
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TOWARD COMMUNISM. PINOCHET DENIED THAT THE DISSOLUTION IMPLIED THE END OF ALL TYPES OF CIVIC OR POLITICAL GROUPINGS. AT THE END OF HIS SPEECH, WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAIL, HE ONCE AGAIN CALLED THE CITIZENRY TO ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH THE CIVIL-MILITARY INTEGRATION.

6. COMMENT: WE WONDER WHY PINOCHET WENT TO THE TROUBLE OF MAKING SUCH A SPEECH. WE SURMISE THAT HE WAS TAKEN ABACK BY CRITICISM BY HIS SUPPORTERS AND OTHERS OF THE SPECIFIC ACT OF DISSOLUTION OF PARTIES AND THE GENERAL ACTIVITY OF THE REGIME, AND FELT OBLIGED TO RESPOND. THE FACT THAT PINOCHET FELT COMPELLED TO SPEAK OUT INDICATES HE IS NOT AS ABSOLUTELY IN CHARGE AS SOME DETRACTORS CLAIM OR AS HE MIGHT PREFER.
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